Vam Mukhi Dakshina Murti Ganesha

The 32 forms of Ganpati Bappa

There are 32 forms of Ganesha. But we see hundreds of idols each year. Some idols have just two hands and some have as many as 16 hands. Ganpati Bappa wields weapons like a sword, discuss, a skull with wine, conch shell, club, an axe or hatchet and/or a walking stick too in his hands. He may hold things like a lotus, stalk of sugarcane, ears of paddy, banana, mango, jackfruit, guava, pomegranate, the rose apple(jamun), the wood apple(bilva) and/or coconut too in his hands. The symbolic messages of each idol are therefore bound to be different. But some basic norms are followed by all Hindus.

Dakshinamurti Ganpati

Ganpati idols with the trunk facing totally towards the right, facing south are rare. They represent the Pingala Nadi or the sun channel. Yama lives in the south. Yama and the Sun are always active, powerful and radiant. Such idols are believed to be the “jagrut” form of Ganesha. All the rituals have to be performed perfectly regularly by tantriks. So such idols are usually enshrined in temples.

The Siddhi Vinayak temple in Mumbai and a temple in Siddhatek, Pune have enshrined this form of Ganesha. Dakshinamurti Ganesha fulfils our wishes very quickly. But all the rituals should be performed meticulously. Else we may end up incurring Ganpati Bappa’s wrath.

Vama Mukhi Ganapati

“Vam” means the north or the left side. It represents the Chandra Nadi or the moon channel. The direction of north is favourable for spiritual progress and bestows us with bliss. So idols in which lord Ganesha’s trunk faces to his left are known as Vam Mukhi Ganeshas. Such forms of Ganesha are easy to please and are kept/brought into our homes.

The girl with the Churma Laddoo

A poor little girl lived with her mother in a small village. The 10 day Ganesh festival was going on in their village. When the little girl looked at the idol of Ganpati Bappa, she felt as if Bappa was looking and smiling only at her. She touched the idol with her small hands gently and returned home with her friends.

The next day she felt like offering something to Ganpati Bappa. She told her mother about it. Her mother could make only two Churma Laddoos with the ingredients she had at home. She gave them to her daughter and said, “Offer one to Ganpati Bappa and then eat the other one.”

The little girl ran to the temple and offered one Churma Laddoo to Ganpati Bappa. She then waited patiently for him to eat it. But the Churma Laddoo remained where she had placed it. She thought to herself and said, “Probably Ganpati Bappa is feeling full with all the food he has just eaten. I’ll wait till he feels hungry again. I’m sure he’ll eat my Churma Laddoo after a while!”So she waited and waited holding her Churma Laddoo in her hand! Patiently. With a smile on her face.

Ganpati Bappa had no choice. He appeared before her, sat down and shared his Churma Laddoo with her! Ganpati Bappa never fails his devotees. Never.

Chauth Gosain

A poor couple could not visit the Ganesha temple on Ganesh Chaturthi because the temple was on the outskirts of their village and they had to report for work. So they offered him Laddoos made out of sesame seeds and jaggery and went off to work.

They returned home, ate a frugal meal and went to sleep. They woke up with a start when they heard someone knocking on their door in the middle of the night. They looked at each other and said, “Who is it?” A voice replied, “Chauth Gosain!” The man opened the door. He was sure that the short hefty man standing outside their door was a thief. They said, “What do you want?” Chauth Gosain looked at them kindly and said,

“Can I use your washroom?” The woman swallowed her fear and said, “This way…”

Chauth Gosain returned after a few minutes. He thanked them for their kindness and left their house. The poor couple was relieved that the thief had not harmed them. But they could not sleep after that either. When the woman visited the washroom, she was shocked to see it overflowing with jewels. They realized that Chauth Gosain was one of Ganesha’s names. They regretted their inability to recognize their lord but served Ganpati Bappa with even more devotion after that.

News spread like wildfire. Their rich arrogant neighbour suddenly became friendly with them. He found out all the details about Chauth Gosain’s visit from the old couple. He did all that that the old couple had done. Exactly.

Chauth Gosain did come to visit him too. He did express his desire to visit the washroom too. The rich man was happy. Very happy. He looked at his wife and said, “It is so simple to please Ganpati Bappa. Let’s do this more often!” His wife nodded her head vigorously. The next day they rushed to their washroom eagerly only to find it filled to the brim with dung.

Ganpati Bappa wrote the script of the Mahabharata. He can rewrite the script of our lives too in whichever way he wants to……

Vignaharta

One day, Uma went hunting with her son Ganesha. They reached a serene spot in the jungle and found several deer grazing nearby. Uma took careful aim and shot out several arrows from her bow. But each time she missed her target by a whisker. She looked at Ganesha with exasperation and asked him if she was doing anything wrong. Ganpati Bappa looked at her calmly and says, “How can your arrow reach your target if you forget to invoke me before you aim?" Uma realized her folly, bowed down and apologized to her son.

Yes, Ganpati Bappa is everyone's Bappa indeed! He is Vignaharta, the remover of obstacles and he is always invoked before we begin our poojas, rites and ceremonies.

Buddhi Priya Ganesha

Rishi Atri and his wife Anasuya invited Shiva, Parvati and Ganesha to their home for lunch one day. Anasuya cooked an elaborate meal for them all. She did the right thing by inviting Ganesha to have his lunch first. Ganesha ate everything that was offered to him with relish. But he did not stop eating. At all.

Shiva, Parvati, Rishi Atri and his wife Anasuya were all ravenous. But they knew that unless Ganesha's hunger was appeased they could not eat. Anasuya did some quick thinking. She cooked a batch of delicate modaks and slathered them with some hot ghee. They were white and bland to look at but were filled with a sweet golden-hued mixture of honey, jaggery and coconut.

When Ganesha ate these modaks, his hunger was satiated instantly and he burped. Shiva, Parvati, Rishi Atri and Anasuya were all happy to see that Ganpati Bappa's hunger had finally been appeased. They then sat down to enjoyed their meal!

"Buddhi Priya Ganesha" refers to Ganesha's fondness for intelligence. Buddhi Priya Ganesha is clever and wise and appreciated Anasuya's quick thinking. This shows us that Bappa is as hungry for food as he is for intelligence. Buddhi Priya Ganesh is also invoked before learning and writing sessions also.

These stories reveal the different aspects of Ganapati Bappa's powers. We understand that we cannot confine him to a few precise facts or stories. But most of us assume that Ganapati Bappa is the remover of obstacles. Yes, he does do that. Very well. But let us always remember that He also places obstacles in our path when we go astray.